

NIEMAN FOUNDATION
FOR JOURNALISM

OFFICE OF THE CURATOR
48 TROWBRIDGE STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS, 02138

November 7, 1974

Hon. William E. Colby
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Bill:

I am extremely grateful to you for your willingness to meet with the Nieman Fellows last Tuesday, for your patience in response to their tough questioning, and for your openness on the subjects you felt you could be open about. I am also grateful for your good humor in the face of the anti-CIA demonstration that forced us into a slightly James Bond-ish arrival at the Faculty Club but otherwise did, I think, no harm.

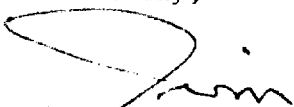
Since Tuesday night many Niemans have told me that that was the most memorable session of the Nieman year, so far--and I dare say they will continue to think so in June. Their reasons are various, depending on their perspectives (for instance: "democracy in action;" "Colby's equivalent would never have met with us in my country;" "the demonstrators would have been jailed;" etc.). But a large part of the memorableness has to do with the CIA Director's willingness to engage in discussion with critics on the press side of the fence--and also how you conducted yourself.

I very much hope that you will never let either demonstrators or side-effects like the Harvard Crimson coverage deter you from a crucially important task: to help break down the intense public distrust of our Executive institutions that is a legacy of Vietnam and Watergate; and in the process, to alert yourself to some ongoing reasons for such distrust--and things CIA, the Congress, and the President might do, or stop doing, to lessen it.

So my message to you, beyond my hearty thanks for that Nieman evening, is to please keep up "Operation Openness," or whatever, despite the inevitable flak you will encounter. I think you and Angus Thuermer are on to something important in the mutual education of government and citizen; and I hope you'll keep it up.

With my gratitude and warm regards,

Sincerely,



James C. Thomson, Jr.